

VZCZCXRO1421
PP RUEHPB
DE RUEHDT #0595 3450905
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 110905Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY DILI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3162
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0755
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHXX/GENEVA IO MISSIONS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0823
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0725
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0552
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0585
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0663
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0448
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 2500

UNCLAS DILI 000595

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS
PACOM FOR POLAD AND JOC
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [TT](#)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GUSMAO AND EX-PM ALKATIRI MEET

¶1. (SBU) Summary: President Gusmao and former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri met for the first time in five months on December 8, and both participated in a traditional Timorese peace ceremony on December 10, taking an oath to work together for peace and stability. Their meetings followed intense pressure from UNMIT and the organizers of a recent high-level dialogue initiative. End Summary.

¶2. (U) President Gusmao, former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, Parliament President Lu'Olo and Prime Minister Ramos-Horta met in the President's office for two hours on December 8. It was the first time Gusmao and Alkatiri had met in five months, and followed intense pressure from UNMIT and the organizers of an ongoing Club de Madrid-sponsored high-level dialogue initiative. Few details have emerged, but a statement from the President's office seems to indicate that the group discussed the upcoming elections, agreed on the need to defend the country's sovereignty, and supported increased roles for PNTL and F-FDTL in addressing the current security problems.

¶3. (SBU) On December 10, Gusmao, Alkatiri and other members of the leadership participated in traditional Timorese peace ceremony which took place in a specially constructed traditional "uma lulik" (spiritual house) in front of the Government Palace. In attendance were traditional authorities from the various regions, top government officials, the local diplomatic corps and UN officials, but very few members of the general public. The Church leadership was conspicuously absent. Highlights of the animist ceremony included the seating of the top leaders on a sacred mat, the sacrifice of a pig, and the swearing of an oath in which the leaders pledged to work together for peace and stability and not to speak badly of each other. A traditional chief announced that anyone breaking this promise would fall under a curse. This was followed by a highly choreographed hug between Gusmao and Alkatiri. The President spoke briefly, on behalf of the government acknowledging past mistakes and promising they would not be repeated.

¶4. (SBU) Contacts who have met with Alkatiri since his return

earlier this month report that the former Prime Minister appears confident, assertive, relaxed and prepared to engage in the upcoming election campaign. While the meetings and pledges of Alkatiri and Gusmao are welcome steps, few here would assume that the fundamental conflicts between the two have been resolved. Continued international pressure on the two leaders to sustain a modus vivendi will undoubtedly will be required. The limitations of traditional peacemaking were illustrated during the subsequent festivities at the Government Palace, when a concert degenerated into a rock fight between western and eastern gangs of youth.

GRAY